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The Probability of Joseph Smith's Story - II

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THE PROBABILITY OF JOSEPH SMITH'S STORY.

BY ELDER B. H. ROBERTS.

II.

As for the *media* of revelation used by the ancient prophets in Israel, and by Joseph Smith in modern times—Urim and Thummim and also the “Seer Stone”—I say again that our scientific skeptics in such things live in the midst of such achievements of man’s ingenuity, and in the daily use of such marvelous instruments invented by men for the ascertainment of truth, that men of science ought not to stumble at accepting, at least as possible, and even as probable, the existence of such *media*. Take for instance the telescope. For ages, men believed that the whole of the universe consisted of sun, moon, earth, and the few fixed stars within the radius of man’s unaided vision. Finally, however, a genius converted a handfull of sand into a lens, adjusted it in a tube, and turned it to the heavens when, lo! the frontiers of the universe were pushed back to an infinite distance, and millions of suns heretofore never seen by human eyes were brought within the range of man’s vision and consciousness. This first telescope has been improved upon from time to time, until now we have instruments of that kind so large and so perfect that our own planets are brought comparatively near for our inspection, while the number of fixed stars now within the range of our vision, by means of these instruments, is quite generally conceded to be about forty millions.

While viewing the starry heavens by the aid of the telescope, in search of new facts, astronomers beheld at enormous distances from us hazy patches of light, concerning the nature of which they could form no definite idea. An improved telescope, however, at

last resolved some of these mists into groups of separate stars; then it was supposed that all such mists were star groups, and that it only required larger and stronger telescopes to demonstrate the truth of that theory. Meantime, however, another wonderful instrument was invented, the spectroscope, an optical instrument which forms and analyzes the spectra of the rays emitted by bodies or substances. Meantime Fraunhofer made the discovery that the spectrum of an ignited gaseous body is non-continuous, and has interrupting lines. Later, Professor John William Draper discovered that the spectrum of an ignited solid is continuous with no interrupting lines. With these facts established, the spectroscope was turned upon the distant patches of nebulæ and it was discovered that some of them were positively of a gaseous nature and not congeries of stars. Thus was another great truth concerning the universe discovered by means of an instrument invented by man.

Nor is the end yet. The eye of man, perhaps, is the most wonderful organ known; wonderful in its powers when unaided by instruments of man's invention, but rendered infinitely more powerful and wonderful when aided by telescope and microscope. Indeed, by these instruments new and unthought of worlds are brought to the consciousness of man and his knowledge infinitely extended. Yet wonderful as is this organ of man, and great as are its achievements when aided by the instruments of man's invention, man's ingenuity has produced a more powerful eye than man's! One that can look longer and see farther than the human eye, even when aided by the most powerful telescope; and registers upon its retina truths otherwise unattainable by man. This instrument Camille Flammarion, the French astronomer and writer, calls "The wonderful new Eye of Science." It is merely a lens connected with a photographic apparatus, and of it the Frenchman just named says:

This giant eye is endowed with four considerable advantages over ours; it sees more quickly, farther, longer, and, wonderful faculty, it receives and retains the impress of what it sees. It sees more quickly: in the half-thousandth of a second, it photographs the sun, its spots, its vortexes, its fires, its flaming mountains, and on an imperishable document. It sees farther: Directed towards any point of the heavens on the darkest night, it discerns stars in the depths of infinite space—worlds,

universes, creations, that our eye could never see by the aid of any telescope. It sees longer: That which we cannot succeed in seeing in a few seconds of observation we shall never see. The photographic eye has but to look long enough in order to see; at the end of half an hour it distinguishes what was before invisible to it; at the end of an hour it will see better still, and the longer it remains directed towards the unknown object, the better and more distinctly it will see it—and this without fatigue. And it retains on the retinal plate all that it has seen.*

This photographic eye, used in what is called the kinetograph, photographs the spokes of the sulky driven at full speed,—which cannot be discerned at all by the human eye—as if standing still. The bullet discharged from the most powerful gun of modern invention, which the human eye cannot follow in its flight, this instrument seems to arrest in mid-air. The ripple waves on the surface of mercury, which no human eye has ever seen—even when assisted by the most powerful microscopes—it faithfully registers, and by its testimony alone we know of their existence. This instrument registers on sensitized tin foil, birds in their flight, express trains at full speed, moving throngs on crowded streets, athletes at their sports, the restless waves of ocean, the tempest's progress, the lightning's flash—all of which by means of another instrument called the kinoscope are reproduced to the life, though the actors in the scenes represented be dead, and rotting in their graves. As these named instruments photograph and reproduce actions, so the phonograph registers the intonations, inflections, and all the peculiarities of voice entrusted to it, and as faithfully reproduces them, once, twice, or a thousand times, so that friends may recognize the intonations and all the peculiarities of inflection and voice, though he who thus speaks has long since been dead or removed to other lands. What more shall I say? Is not enough here presented concerning the instruments of man's invention to justify the *probability* of the existence of *media* that can accomplish all that is ascribed to Urim and Thummim and Seer Stone by Joseph Smith? Will the reader say no, because to Urim and Thummim or Seer Stone there seems to have been ascribed by some almost intellectual qualities—the power to take the characters of

* The *Cosmopolitan Magazine* for September, 1896.

an unknown language and present the interpretation of them in intelligible English; while to all these other instruments, to which reference is made, there seems to be ascribed only a mechanical quality—the power merely to extend the vision of the human eye—to magnify to human vision the smaller objects in nature—to register movements too rapid or too minute for the unaided human eye to see—to conduct sounds to greater distance—to send out into space and receive vibrations that convey intelligence?

But may not this objection, if such it can be considered, rest upon false premises? Those who advance it ascribe to Urim and Thummim and the Seer Stone qualities not claimed for it by Joseph Smith. I have already called attention to the fact* that the instruments used by the Prophet Joseph in translation were not everything and the Prophet nothing: that the primary factor in the work of translation was the mind of the Prophet enlightened by the Spirit of God; that the instruments he used were merely aids in the work not the primary factors. In Urim and Thummim or Seer Stone appeared, according to the testimony of Martin Harris and David Whitmer, the Nephite characters, and underneath them an interpretation in English; but it was the inspired mind of the Prophet, not any quality in Urim and Thummim or Seer Stone, that wrought out the translation. The translation was thought out in the mind of the Prophet, and confirmed by the Holy Spirit;† which, in the work of translation, as in all things else of a divine nature, is God's witness for the truth. The Urim and Thummim and Seer Stone possessed the quality of reflecting the Nephite characters, and for the time reflecting also the translation of them wrought out in the inspired mind of the Prophet, and held them before his vision until faithfully recorded; and when this fragment of translation was dismissed from the mind of the Prophet, it disappeared also from Urim and Thummim.

* See M. I. A. Manual for 1903-4, chapter vii.

† See Doc. and Cov., sections viii, ix. Also chapter vii of Manual 1903-4. I do not think I can too strongly urge upon the reader's attention the statements in the revelations of God found in sections viii and ix of the Doctrine and Covenants, for there we have God's description of how the gift of translation is to be exercised, and His word upon the subject is to be taken, before any human words spoken or any human theory advanced.

If it should still be objected that even this view of Urim and Thummim and Seer Stone leaves those instruments many more times wonderful than any instrument of man's invention, it should be remembered that they were instruments prepared or selected by divine intelligence, and as that intelligence far exceeds the intelligence of man, so may it be expected that the instruments of his devising or selection will excel, in quality and power, anything which man could invent. Meantime those instruments which man has contrived to aid him in his search and ascertainment of truth, make belief possible in the existence and use of the more wonderful instruments of God's devising.

The question is often asked—and it bears upon the probability of Joseph Smith's statements respecting the Book of Mormon, because the answer that has to be made gives rise to doubts, and sometimes to sneers on the part of those receiving it—the question is asked, I repeat, “What became of the gold plates from which Joseph Smith claims to have translated the Book of Mormon, can they be seen now? Is the Church in possession of them?” The answer is, “No; the Prophet returned them to the angel Moroni, and he, doubtless, now has possession of them, and is their guardian.”* As remarked, this answer is declared to be unsatisfactory, and is often ridiculed; for worldly wisdom fancies that the Prophet had a most direct means of establishing the truth as to the existence and character of the plates, if only he had retained them in his possession, or deposited them in some state or national

* I soon found out the reason why I had received such strict charges to keep them safe, and why it was that the messenger had said that when I had done what was required at my hand, he would call for them. For no sooner was it known that I had them, than the most strenuous exertions were used to get them from me. Every stratagem that could be invented was resorted to for that purpose. The persecution became more bitter and severe than before, and multitudes were on the alert continually to get them from me if possible. But by the wisdom of God, they remained safe in my hands, until I had accomplished by them what was required at my hand. When, according to arrangements, the messenger called for them, I delivered them up to him; and he has them in his charge until this day, being the second day of May, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-eight (Church History, vol. I., pp. 18, 19).

institution of learning or archæology. Joseph Smith acted under the direction of Moroni in the matter of the plates of the Book of Mormon; why he was not permitted to keep the book of plates is not, perhaps, positively known. Part of the record was sealed, as the Prophet himself informs us;* and as the time had not come for that part of it to be translated, it may be that that was one reason why it should be still kept in the custody of the angel. Moreover, in this life we are required by divine wisdom to walk by faith, not by sight. It is part of our education that we learn to act with reference to sacred things on probabilities. A veil of oblivion is stretched over our past spirit-existence. The future is hidden largely from our view, and we are required to perform this life's journey from the cradle to the grave in the midst of uncertainties, except as we increase our faith and establish assurance by the development of spiritual strength from within. Why this should be so may not always seem clear to us; but of the fact of it there is no doubt. Nor can there be any doubt as to the wisdom of it, and the benefit of it to mankind, since our Father-God, has so ordained it. Nor is it in "Mormonism" alone that certain direct material evidences are denied to men concerning divine things. Infidels refer to the opportunities which they think the impudent challengers of the persecutors of the Son of God afforded Him to demonstrate his divine power, and prove the truth of his mission, when they said, "If thou be the son of God, come down from the cross. * * * "If he be the King of Israel, let him now come down from the cross, and we will believe him."† What an opportunity was afforded him here to respond to their challenges and cover them

* These records were engraven on plates which had the appearance of gold, each plate was six inches wide and eight inches long, and not quite so thick as common tin. They were filled with engravings, in Egyptian characters, and bound together in a volume as the leaves of a book, with three rings running through the whole. The volume was something near six inches in thickness, a part of which was sealed. The characters of the unsealed part were small, and beautifully engraved. The whole book exhibited many marks of antiquity in its construction, and much skill in the art of engraving. (*Mill. Star*, vol. xix, p. 118.)

† Matt. xxvii : 40, 42.

with confusion and fear. But the Son of God heeded them not, and infidels everywhere run away with the opinion that he missed the opportunity of his career if, indeed, he was the Son of God—the Lord of Life—the Master of Death.

Moses gave out the statement that the Law of Israel, the Ten Commandments, were written by the finger of God on tables of stone.* These, in his anger, Moses broke to pieces in their presence, when he found that during his brief absence in the Mount, obtaining the law, Israel had turned to the folly of idolatry. But a second set of tables was prepared, and again on these God carved with his own hands the Ten Commandments. Moses placed them in the ark of shittim wood, which by divine appointment he provided, and this constituted the “Ark of the Covenant.”†

Again, when the children of Israel were disposed to rebel against the priesthood of God's appointment, under divine direction, Moses called upon each of the twelve princes of the house of Israel to present before the Lord a rod with the name of his tribe upon it. Among these was Aaron's rod, representing the tribe of Levi. All were placed in the “Tabernacle of Witness” before the Lord. On the morrow when Moses went into the “Tabernacle of Witness”—“Behold the rod of Aaron, of the house of Levi, was budded, brought forth buds, and yielded almonds”: and all this in a single night! Thus the Lord gave a palpable evidence to Israel of his choosing the house of Aaron and the tribe of Levi to stand before him in the priest's office; and the Lord said unto Moses, “Bring Aaron's rod again before the testimony, to be kept for a token against the rebels.”‡

The unbelieving world to whom Israel's message was afterwards sent, might demand that the tables of stone and Aaron's rod that budded should be displayed for their inspection that faith might take hold of the unbelieving; but there is no record that these sacred things were ever exhibited for such a purpose.

The infidels of our own day frequently remark that the prayer of Dives to Abraham ought to have been graciously granted, and

* Deut. ix: 8-11.

† Deut. x: 1-5.

‡ Numbers xvii.

Lazarus sent to bear witness to the relatives of the tortured nobleman that they might escape his sad fate; but Abraham's answer was, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them!" "Nay, father Abraham," answered Dives, "but if one went unto them from the dead, they will repent." But Abraham said: "If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."*

Referring again to the Savior: unbelievers marvel that Jesus confined his visitations after his resurrection to a few of his faithful followers only—to those who already believed on him. Why did he not appear in all the majesty of his immortal life, after his resurrection, before the high priests and the Sanhedrin of the Jews? Before the court of Pilate? Before the rabble who had impeously clamored in the streets for his blood to be upon them and upon their children. Why? The only answer to this question exists in the fact apparent from the whole course of God's dealings with the world in relation to sacred things; *viz.*, God has chosen certain witnesses for himself in relation to sacred matters, and demands that his children shall walk in faith on the words which his chosen servants declare unto them. Thus Peter, on the matter of Christ showing himself to the world, says:

Him God raised up the third day, and showed him openly; *not to all the people, but unto witnessess chosen before of God*, even to us who did eat and drink with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach, and to testify that it is he which was ordained of God to be the judge of the quick and dead.†

Judas (one of the twelve, not Iscariot, but the brother of James) on one occasion asked the same question that infidels have been asking for many generations, "How is it that thou wilt manifest thyself unto us, and not unto the world?" Jesus answered and said unto him, "If a man love me, he will keep my words; and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him. He that loveth me not keepeth not my sayings: and the word which ye hear is not mine, but the Father's which sent me. These things have I spoken unto you,

* Luke xvi: 13, 31.

† Acts x: 40-42.

being yet present with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.”* Such is the Christ’s answer to the question of his disciple, and in it one sees that God has ordained that in addition to the special witnesses, the prophets, whom he ordains to testify of his truth, that the Holy Spirit shall be his supreme and universal witness for things divine. “If a man love me he will keep my words: * * * These things have I spoken unto you being yet with you. But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things.† * * * When the Comforter is come whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of Truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me, and ye also shall bear witness because ye have been with me from the beginning.”‡ * * * “I give you to understand that no man speaking by the Spirit of God calleth Jesus accursed; and that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost.”§ God, in his wisdom, and for the accomplishment of his own wise purposes with reference to us, has ordained that his children in this world’s probation shall walk by faith, not by sight. To produce that faith, he sends forth special chosen servants, prophets, apostles, his own Son, and through them makes known the divine will. Then when drawn to God by this faith, when made love-inspired towards God, he gives the witness of the Holy Spirit, by and through which man may know the truth, for he becomes possessed of the very spirit of divine intelligence and of truth, by which power he is made to know all that is true.

These principles obtain in this last dispensation of the gospel, at the head of which stands Joseph Smith as prophet and president. He comes as did Noah, Enoch, Moses, the prophets, Christ and the apostles—he comes with a message from God,—with a new volume of scripture, whose express purpose is to enlarge the

* John xiv: 22-26.

† John xiv: 26.

‡ John xv: 26, 27.

§ I Cor. xii: 3.

foundations of faith. He and his associates bear witness of its truth, and those who will give heed to that testimony, and will seek to God for further knowledge, are expressly promised in the Book of Mormon itself, that they shall receive a manifestation of its truth by the power of the Holy Ghost; "And by the power of the Holy Ghost," says this Nephite record, "ye may know the truth of all things."* Throughout, it will be seen that in this matter of the Book of Mormon the divine Power is acting in harmony with those great principles which have been operating in the spiritual economy of this world from the beginning; which fact, in reality, is at least an incidental testimony of the truth of the work.

In the light of all these reflections, then, together with the fact that part of the Book of Mormon was sealed, the time not then having arrived for its translation, there is nothing remarkable in the circumstance of the Nephite plates being returned to the care of the angel guardian of them. Certainly there is nothing unreasonable in such a procedure, and surely nothing in the circumstance that warrants the ridicule with which that statement has sometimes been received. Moreover, human guardianship of such things is by no means as secure as some may conceive it to be. Take for example the fate which befell the Egyptian papyrus from which the Prophet translated the Book of Abraham. It is an item of Church history that in 1835 the Saints in Kirtland purchased, of one Michael H. Chandler, some Egyptian mummies, in the sarcophagus of which was found certain rolls of papyrus, beautifully engraved with Egyptian characters.

* Behold I would exhort you that when ye shall read these things, if it be wisdom in God that ye should read them, that ye would remember how merciful the Lord hath been unto the children of men, from the creation of Adam, even down until the time that ye shall receive these things, and ponder it in your hearts. And when ye shall receive these things, I would exhort you that ye would ask God, the eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost; and by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things (Moroni x: 3-5).

Upon examination, Joseph Smith found the papyrus to be the writings of Abraham and of Joseph, the son of Jacob, who was sold into Egypt. Portions of these records the Prophet translated into the English language, and the translation was published in the *Times and Seasons*, volume III, and subsequently made part of the "Pearl of Great Price." After the death of the Prophet, the mummies together with the records on papyrus were left in charge of his mother, Lucy Smith. She afterwards parted with them, under what circumstances is not positively known. Finally, the records and mummies found their way into Wood's Museum, in Chicago, where, according to the statement of the editors of the Plano edition of "Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith and his Progenitors," by Lucy Smith, they were destroyed in the Chicago fire of 1871.* Thus the writings of Abraham, after being preserved for many generations in the linen wrappings of Egyptian mummies, were consumed by fire in a modern city, a circumstance which illustrates the uncertainty of human means to preserve important documents, and justifies angel guardianship of a record as sacred as are the plates from which the Book of Mormon was translated.

Another incident connected with the probability of Joseph Smith's story concerning the Book of Mormon, and which, like the circumstance of the Prophet returning the plates to the angel, meets with ridicule,—is the loss of the 116 pages of manuscript, through the unfaithfulness of Martin Harris. This subject is spoken of at length in chapter five, of M. I. A. Manual for 1903-4, a brief summary of its main points, however, is given here:

After acting for some time as amanuensis to the Prophet Joseph, in the work of translation, Harris repeatedly importuned him for permission to show as much of the work as they had translated to a number of his relatives and friends. The Prophet believing this request beyond his right to grant, under the strict instructions he had received from the angel, presented the request of Harris to the Lord, with the result that it was denied. Harris still importuned, and again the Prophet asked permission to grant

* See Plano edition of the above named work, 1880, note on page 91.

this request, notwithstanding the will of the Lord was known; and the second time the request was denied. Finally, however, after further importuning, under strict instructions and limitations, permission was granted for Harris to take possession of the manuscript, and read it to those whom he had named—Preserved Harris, his own wife, his father and mother, and a Mrs. Cobb, his wife's sister. Harris repaired to Palmyra, where he read the manuscript to members of his own family, and others not included among those to whom he was permitted under his agreement with the Prophet to read it.* The manuscript was finally stolen from him, and for a time—and even now—what fate overtook it, is uncertain.

This incident, as we have already stated at length,† lost to Joseph Smith, for a time, the gift of translation, and also possession of the plates and Urim and Thummim; but through sincere repentance, he was received again into the favor of the Lord.

On being permitted to resume the work of translation, however, the Prophet was informed through divine communication that those who had stolen the manuscript from Harris, designed to hold it until he should translate again that part which had fallen into their hands. If the Prophet's second translation should be like the first, then it was the intention of the conspirators to change the manuscript in their possession, and claim that the translation was not obtained by divine aid, else the second would be like the first; but since it would by this trick be proved to be different, the claim of divine inspiration in the translation of the book must fall to the ground, and Joseph Smith's pretension to being a Seer and Prophet of God would fall with it; and thus the work God designed to accomplish through him would be destroyed. The Lord revealed this plot to Joseph Smith, and warned him not to translate again Moroni's abridgment of the Book of Lehi—which comprised so much of the manuscript as had been entrusted to Harris.‡ On the contrary, he was commanded to

* History of the Church, vol. I, p. 21.

† See Manual 1903-4, chapter v.

‡ See preface to first edition of the Book of Mormon.

translate what are called in the Book of Mormon the "Smaller Plates of Nephi," and let that stand in the place of the translation of the Book of Lehi which Harris had lost.

A word of explanation here: Two sets of plates were kept by the first Nephi and his successors. One set might be called the secular, the other the sacred record of the Nephite people. They, however, called them the "Smaller" and "Larger" Plates of Nephi. On the former was recorded the ministry of the prophets, the word of the Lord to them, and much of their teaching and preaching; on the latter, the reigns of the kings, their wars and contentions, and the secular affairs of the people generally. Still, even on the "Smaller Plates of Nephi" there was a reasonably succinct account of the principle events of Nephite history, from the time Lehi left Jerusalem until four hundred years had passed away.

When Mormon found among the records delivered into his keeping the Smaller Plates of Nephi, he was so well pleased with their contents that he placed the whole of them with the abridgment he had made from the larger Nephite records. "And I do this," he informs us, "for a wise purpose; for thus it whispereth me according to the workings of the Spirit of the Lord which is in me. And now I do not know all things, but the Lord knoweth all things which are to come, wherefore he worketh in me to do according to his will." By the addition of the Smaller Plates of Nephi to Mormon's abridgment of the Larger Plates, it will be observed that there was a double line of history for a period of about 400 years. Therefore, when, through carelessness and breaking his agreement with the Prophet, Martin Harris lost the translation of the first part of Mormon's abridgment, and those into whose hands the manuscript had fallen designed to change it and destroy the claims of the Prophet to inspiration in translating it—as already stated—under divine direction he translated the Smaller Plates of Nephi, and let that translation take the place of the one which had been stolen, and thus the plan of the conspirators against the work was thwarted. This statement of the Prophet, however, as already remarked, comes in for its share of ridicule, and is generally spoken of as a very clever escape for the Prophet out of what is called a rather perplexing dilemma. The Prophet's statement of the incident was published at the time the first edi-

tion of the Book of Mormon issued from the press, and, in fact, stands in the preface to the book, which I reproduce here:

PREFACE.

To the Reader—

As many false reports have been circulated respecting the following work, and also many unlawful measures taken by evil designing persons to destroy me, and also the work, I would inform you that I translated, by the gift and power of God, and caused to be written, one hundred and sixteen pages, the which I took from the Book of Lehi, which was an account abridged from the plates of Lehi, by the hand of Mormon; which said account, some person or persons have stolen and kept from me, notwithstanding my utmost exertions to recover it again—and being commanded of the Lord that I should not translate the same over again, for Satan had put it into their hearts to tempt the Lord their God, by altering the words, that they did read contrary from that which I translated and caused to be written; and if I should bring forth the same words again, or, in other words, if I should translate the same over again, they would publish that which they had stolen, and Satan would stir up the hearts of this generation, that they might not receive this work: but behold, the Lord said unto me, I will not suffer that Satan shall accomplish his evil design in this thing: therefore thou shalt translate from the plates of Nephi, until ye come to that which ye have translated, which ye have retained; and behold ye shall publish it as the record of Nephi; and thus I will confound those who have altered my words. I will not suffer that they shall destroy my work; yea, I will show unto them that my wisdom is greater than the cunning of the Devil. Wherefore, to be obedient unto the commandments of God, I have, through his grace and mercy, accomplished that which he hath commanded me respecting this thing. I would also inform you that the plates of which hath been spoken, were found in the township of Manchester, Ontario county, New York.

THE AUTHOR.

Thus from the beginning the Prophet boldly declared that which the Lord had revealed to him concerning this effort on the part of the conspirators to destroy the work; and there was not one who rose to contradict his statement, at the time, although some anti-“Mormon” writers of later years assert—but without any warrant of proof—that, enraged at the part her husband was taking in producing the book, Mrs. Martin Harris burned the manuscript. This, however, she always denied. The first publication

referring to this subject, aside from what the prophet published in the Preface to the first edition of the Book of Mormon, is Howe's "History of Mormonism" (1834) Painsville. This is an anti-"Mormon" book and of the manuscript incident says: "The facts respecting the lost manuscript we have not been able to ascertain. They sometimes charged the wife of Harris with having burned it, but this is denied by her." I quote from the second (1840) edition of Howe's work, page 22.

Meantime, attention is called to the fact that there is nothing improbable in the statement of Joseph Smith; but on the contrary all the conditions obtaining in the neighborhoods where he resided while bringing forth the work favor the probability of such a conspiracy as he charges—the unwarranted but repeated efforts made by his enemies to wrest the plates from his possession—the home of his parents repeatedly beset by mobs—the issue of warrants by justices of the peace for searching his wagon for the plates; and subsequently the actions of Mr. Grandin, his printer, who, after entering into contract to print the Book of Mormon was certainly in honor bound to render him all the assistance in his power in getting out the work in the best order possible, and protecting him in his copyrights—the actions, I say, of Mr. Grandin, in permitting Squire Cole* the use of his press on nights and Sundays in order to secretly publish his "Dogberry Papers," in which was to appear a garbled edition of the Book of Mormon in weekly instalments—the mass meetings held in Palmyra and vicinity in which resolutions were passed not to purchase the book should it ever issue from the press (which action caused Mr. Grandin to suspend the work of printing, until the Prophet could be brought from Harmony, in Pennsylvania, to give renewed assurance of his ability to meet the price of printing†—the confession of J. N. Tucker, one of the employees of Grandin's printing establishment, that after setting up a sheet in type, it was secreted and then given out that it was lost and that another would have to be produced, which

*See pp. 77, 78 of part I, Manual for 1903-4. It is unthinkable that this effort to publish a garbled edition of the Book of Mormon was unknown to Grandin and those employed in his establishment.

† See pp. 77, 78, Part I, Manual, 1903-4.

when done was unlike the first*—all these well attested circumstances establish the fact of a wide-spread and bitter opposition to the coming forth of the Book of Mormon; and, failing in that, then a determination to prevent its acceptance as a revelation from God—all these things make it very easy to believe that such a conspiracy against the work as the Prophet describes in the Preface of the first edition of the Book of Mormon, actually existed; and removes his statement on that subject far beyond the influence of the sneers and ridicule of those who oppose the work.

* See pp. 74, 75 Part I, Manual, 1903-4, where this incident is treated, and the fact pointed out that the Prophet's precautions had protected the work from the effects of such tricks as this described by Tucker.

(THE END.)

HELP OTHERS.

Let us help one another, my sister, my brother,
 To bear now our burden of pain:
 Let us speak the kind word; let no harsh tone be heard:
 From conduct displeasing refrain.

O the smile or the tear of sympathy dear,
 Sets with rainbows the storm-clouds of strife:
 And the "soft answer" true, will a mighty work do,
 To bring sunshine and health to our life.

Let us use heart and mind, sweet devices to find,
 To comfort, encourage and bless:
 And do with our might, kind acts that are right,
 And never, no never oppress.

—MS. Paper, "Herald of Union," Mammoth, Utah.